

Snail

Physa species nov “A”

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DESCRIPTION

Taxonomy and Basic Description

This snail was recently discovered and is in the process of being described (Wethington and Dillon 2005). It may previously have been found in South Carolina and confused with *Physa acuta* (8.3 mm, 0.32 inches) and *P. hendersoni* (6.7 mm, 0.26 inches). However, this species is larger than either *P. acuta* or *P. hendersoni*; this undescribed snail is 12 mm (0.47 inches) in total length. Dillon (2004a) observed that this snail will produce sterile hybrid offspring with *P. acuta* in the laboratory; however, it did not hybridize with *P. hendersoni*.

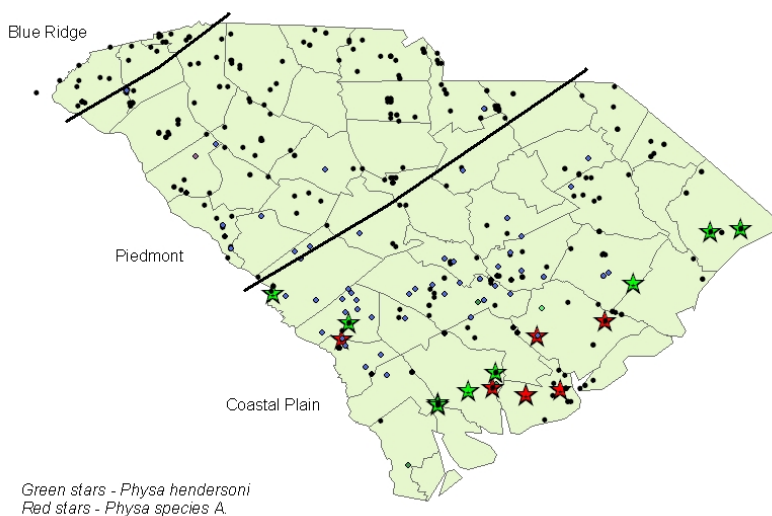
Status

This snail was recently found at eight sites in Dillon's (2004a) South Carolina survey, which indicates that it may not be particularly rare. However, we have very little information on this species. Until the taxonomy of this snail is completed and additional surveys are conducted, we will not be able to determine its status.



POPULATION DISTRIBUTION AND SIZE

This undescribed snail was first discovered in a ditch on John's Island in Charleston County and has been found at several sites on the coastal plain. This snail has also been found in one location in North Carolina. Because this species has previously been confused with others, it may be present in more locations than have currently been determined.



HABITAT AND NATURAL COMMUNITY REQUIREMENTS

Physa sp. nov “A” has been found in seasonally drying ponds in forested swamps in the coastal plain where the water is not acidic. As stated above, this species can also be found in agricultural ditches; it was first discovered in a ditch on John’s Island in Charleston County. (Rob Dillon pers. comm., July 28, 2004).

CHALLENGES

Little is known about the potential challenges to this snail. It may not be particularly threatened and does not appear to be restricted to pristine habitats. However, the fact that we know so little about its life history and habitat requirements make it a priority species for further research in South Carolina. Further, it is important to determine the taxonomic status of this unknown snail to fully determine its status.

CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

There are currently no known conservation accomplishments for *Physa* sp. nov “A.”

CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Complete the description of this *Physa* sp. nov “A” and determine its taxonomic relationship with other species through consultation with malacological experts or genetic investigations
- Conduct studies to determine the habitat requirements of *Physa* sp. nov “A.”
- Conduct surveys to determine whether *Physa* sp. nov “A” is present at other sites in South Carolina.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Publication of a formal description of this species will represent one measure of success. Determining the exact distribution and habitat/natural history needs of *Physa* sp. nov “A” would also be considered to be a success.